



Dental Newsletter

Dental Disease

How to Tell if Your Pet Has Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common ailment affecting pet dogs and cats. The recognition and treatment of dental disease is often overlooked by veterinarians and pet owners alike.

Halitosis, or bad breath, is the most common sign of oral disease and is most often caused by periodontal disease. This is an infection of the gums and potentially the supporting structures of the teeth. Plaque builds up on the teeth every day and left in place, the plaque can mineralize to form tartar. The tartar sticks to the tooth surface and forms a scaffold for more plaque accumulation and an ideal haven for destructive bacteria.

The most obvious clue to dental disease is the buildup of tartar on the tooth surface but this can also cause inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) and gingival recession.

Gingivitis can be reversible, once tartar is removed. Left unchecked, gingivitis can cause permanent damage to gums and the supporting structures of the tooth which can cause chronic pain. A favourable outcome can only be reached with tooth extraction.

Some of the other signs of dental disease are associated with chronic mouth pain. These signs may include preferring soft food, declining to play with toys or accepting hard treats. You may notice your pet chewing on one side of the mouth or vomiting poorly chewed food. Increased salivation or pawing or rubbing the face can also be signs of oral pain.

It is important to realize that some periodontal or dental disease may not be visible to even the most experienced observer. A complete periodontal exam including dental x-rays is often necessary to uncover the extent of disease present.

Professional Dental Care

What is involved in having a dental procedure?

A proper dental exam and prophylaxis (cleaning and polishing) can only be performed under general anesthetic. Some basic blood tests (including blood cell counts and evaluation of liver and kidney function) may be required before anaesthesia. This is to reduce the chances of any problems developing associated with your pet's ability to use the anesthetic agents and other medications (pain control or antibiotics) given during and after the procedure.

After your pet has been placed under general anesthetic, a full oral examination is performed. Depending on this exam, dental radiographs may be necessary to determine whether extractions are required or if any affected teeth can be saved. Appropriate treatment for any problems detected is completed and scaling (both hand

and ultrasonic) is performed to clean the teeth. Afterwards, the teeth are polished to smooth the enamel surface to decrease the ability of tartar to adhere to the teeth.

The length of the dental procedure may vary. A straightforward cleaning may take 20-30 minutes and pets often go home the same day. If x-rays, extractions or other treatments are required then the procedure will take more time. Some pets will benefit from an overnight stay to receive medication for post-operative pain or be maintained on intravenous fluids.

When you pick up your pet, one of our Registered Veterinary Technicians will discuss which procedures were performed, review any medications that may be continued at home and discuss options for preventive dental health-care to maintain your pet's future oral health.

February is Dental Health Month

We have always promoted National Pet Dental Health Month here at North Bay Animal Hospital. A large number of our clientèle take advantage of our February promotional discount on an annual basis. For any pets over 5 years of age our clients receive a mail-out reminder in January. If you want us to call you ahead of time, we can put you on a callback reminder list. Let us know at your annual visit or give us a call.



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New Clients Welcome!

Our Favourite Products

How can I prevent further dental disease after a dental procedure has been performed?

Once your pet's mouth has healed (between 3 days and 2 weeks depending on the disease involvement) you can start a preventive dental health program. The ideal products will have physical and chemical actions to clean the teeth on a regular basis. These products include:

-  Finger tooth brush and veterinary tooth paste (too much foaming and fluoride in human tooth paste!)
-  Hill's T/D dental diet
-  Medi-Cal Royal Canin dental diet, treats and chews
-  Enzadent oral care chews & dental products
-  Greenies dental treats & chews
-  Healthy Mouth water additive
-  Breathalyser dental products
-  CET VeggieDent chews
-  Leba III

Grading Your Pet's Dental Disease – How We Determine Cost

How much will a dental procedure cost?

The cost of your pet's dental procedure will depend on the severity or grade of their dental disease and other possible underlying disease conditions. These will determine how much anesthetic and surgical time is required for the procedure as well as the length of your pet's hospital stay. Take-home medications may also be necessary and their costs are individualized. We use the following grading system at our clinic.

Grade I - otherwise healthy pet under 7 years of age involving cleaning and polishing of the teeth only – may have gingivitis without loss of gum attachment - pet home the same day – take-home medications optional

Grade II - otherwise healthy pet with some periodontal pockets and attachment loss facilitating the need for some dental x-rays - possibly a few extractions and overnight hospital care – involves dental cleaning and polishing of healthy teeth - intravenous fluid therapy and post-operative pain medication and antibiotics

Grade III - severe loss of gum attachment and severe loss of supporting tooth structures – requires many dental x-rays and extractions with specialized oral surgical techniques and local dental anesthesia required - cleaning and polishing of remaining healthy teeth - overnight hospitalization, intravenous fluid therapy, advanced post-operative pain control with or without antibiotics

